

HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY WINNER 2020

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### The Valiant Voting Efforts of Sojourner Truth

**I am not going to die, I'm going home like a shooting star** were the powerful words spoken from Sojourner Truth, a civil and women's rights activist of the nineteenth century. Truth was born a slave in New York in 1797. She developed a strong sense of determination and boldness as she paved the way for women like me, to have a voice in present day voting.

Truth grew up experiencing the harsh consequences of slavery, as she was a victim of physical labor, mistreatment, auctions, and violent punishments. In 1827, Truth was able to escape the perils of slavery and she bought her freedom for \$20 with the help of an abolitionist family. At that moment in her life, her journey was just beginning. Throughout the 1820s and 30s she had been exposed to religious revivals that had groomed her to become a prominent public speaker. As she worked for a local minister, she grew to be a charismatic preacher on the evils of slavery. Truth's efforts were so significant that she had opportunities to meet powerful abolitionists and activists like Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony. In 1851, Truth helped to lead a women's rights conference, as she spearheaded the women's rights movement. Truth delivered her *Ain't I A Woman?* speech, which is now recognized as one of the most famous abolitionist and women's rights speeches in American history. In her speech, Truth said, "Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him. If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them." It is evident that she believed in racial and gender equality and through her speaking efforts she promoted female empowerment to her audience.

Throughout this journey, she made several sacrifices in order to stay focused on her task. She had to rethink her morals and priorities in order to stay true to her activist focus. Truth emphasized the importance of suffrage for both enslaved men and women.

**From the determined and bold actions of Sojourner Truth, she has shown me and millions of other girls around the world how to be a valiant woman of the vote, firmly believe in women's rights and our opportunities to vote, as I am a registered voter and plan to promptly express my ideas once I approach voting age.**